

Bernadette Foley

Artist Statement

The work shown here represents three modes of my interaction with mosaics. There is an obvious strong connection between the materials however the way that I approached the materials for each are all very separate. As a whole, this work reflects the stream of consciousness that I followed when working through the idea of a 'mosaic' as an artistic concept.

Working in both traditional and innovative mosaic techniques, I began by making two-dimensional mosaics with translucent glass and reflective elements like mirror. At this time I was thinking about imaging my spirituality and I was working in a very intuitive, improvisational manner. Elements of light, translucent color and reflection all were major factors in this work both visually and spiritually. The process of laying the glass pieces on plexi-glass in an abstract pattern became a meditative process for me and even a therapeutic one.

In retrospect, these 'stained glass' like, crystalline pieces seem to be approaching the look of decoration and in response to that I have poked a bit of fun at the notion of decoration. By abandoning the two dimensional, geometric orientations and replacing it with a more formed, shaped surface, I'm expanding this idea of 'delicate play'. Experimenting with shaping, heating and bending the plexi-glass surfaces, my goal is to emphasize the fragility and playfulness of the bright glass that covers it. I'm also working towards highlighting the paradox of danger and beauty in the materials, such as broken, shattered glass and mirror, in a three-dimensional space.

At the same time that these mischievous shaped pieces came to be, I was thinking about interior, three-dimensional spaces that could be covered in glass. First, I looked at images of amethysts and other crystals and became fascinated by the combination of the light fracturing, crystalline beauty with the natural rock build-up that happens around it. After someone suggested that I look at Italian Renaissance grottoes, Mexican caves and bone mounds, I was fascinated by these beautiful, grotesque underground spaces that contain crystal, rock, shell, bone, water and life. The spiritual inspiration that influenced me earlier this year resurfaced for the making of these pieces. Literally digging into the walls of my studio, I wanted to create an interior space that uses elements of beauty that we both overtly and covertly recognize. These have become installation pieces in the form of dark, natural vessels that are evocative of grotesque and subliminal wonder.